

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 and cancels claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19 and 22-24. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26.

Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as their invention. As indicated above, claims 2 and 3 were canceled. Therefore, this rejection is rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 14, 17-19 and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Mackey (U.S. Patent No. 6,141,611); claim 12 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mackey; and claim 13 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mackey in view of Bague (U.S. Patent No. 6,246,933). As indicated above, claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19 and 22-24 were canceled. Therefore, these rejections with respect to claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19 and 22-24 are rendered moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

It should be noted that the cancellation of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19 and 22-24 was not intended nor should it be considered as an agreement on Applicants' part that the features recited in these claims are taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. The cancellation of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19 and 22-24 was simply intended to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 9 of the Office Action that claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 would be allowable if rewritten or amended in independent form including all the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims. Amendments were made to claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 to place them in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 are allowable as indicated by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (500.41212X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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